

## JERKING CON EDISON AROUND

first i say

'i'm applying for gas & electric  
service — will pay the first  
of august — i promise'

& they say

ok

then i say

'can't pay this all at once —  
break it down into 3 equal \$50  
payments & i'll make one  
payment today'

& they say

ok

then i say

'that line's too long —  
i'll zip around the corner

& pay at the check-cashing joint

& they say

ok

then i call back the next day

& say 'i can't pay this 50 this mo —

let me go till oct. 1 & i'll make

2 payments on the first'

& they say

ok

those employees just like me

not so much scheming as required

to best the system every second of

our lives / they're helping me do it

too as if enjoying every twist & turn

in the fiction i'm writing them

even now

i'm figuring out what to say

on the first that'll set them up

so they say

ok

again

i'm sure if i stop amusing them

they'll come down on me

like hostile critics who'd

plunge me into the cold & darkness

— Cory Monaco

Bronx NY